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U. S. Department of Agriculture

DAIRY COW REPLACEMENT PLAN.

A radio talk by D. P. Trent, Commodities Division, ~~Agricultural Adjustment~~ Administration, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, Thursday, March 29, 1934, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations.

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You have been given an outline of the dairy production control program which will be offered to the dairy producers of the country. You have been told that as a health measure, the elimination of tubercular cows and cows affected with other diseases will be speeded up. You have been told that funds will be provided for the purchase of surplus milk to be distributed through emergency relief agencies. You have been told also that if the plan is accepted by dairy producers, a production control contract will be offered to individual dairymen. Each dairyman accepting the contract will produce ten or fifteen per cent less dairy products for market in the next year than he produced on the average during the past two years. Upon compliance with this contract he will be paid benefit payments based upon the reduction he makes in number of pounds of butterfat marketed. You have been told too that there is no thought of creating a shortage or scarcity of dairy products. The program is designed to adjust production in accordance with the ability and willingness of the consumer to buy at such prices as will enable dairymen to continue producing and receive a fair return for what they produce.

There are two million more dairy cows on the farms of the country today than there were in 1930. One of the reasons for this is that the price of beef cattle has been very low and dairy cows which would normally have been culled from the herds and sent to market as beef cows have been held back on the farms. If the proposed dairy production control plan is accepted by dairymen and put into operation, each dairyman who signs a contract will decide for himself the best method of reducing his milk sales.

Now dairymen can cut market supplies by using more milk at home, by changing feeding practices, and in several other ways. Some men may wish to sell a few cows out of their herds. But, if a large number of cows should be thrown on the beef market, it might further complicate the difficult problem of the beef cattle men. To avoid this, and at the same time to carry out a constructive rehabilitation program for farm families now lacking milkcows, the surplus dairy cow replacement plan has been made a part of the dairy adjustment program.

The federal census indicates that 1,400,000 farms in the United States are without family milk cows. Careful surveys indicate that farm families without milk cows on an average consume less than half as much dairy products per capita as other farm families. It seems entirely sound and practicable that cows be distributed to farms now lacking them.

A plan is in the making for carrying out this idea. The plan would be operated by the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, with the cooperation and assistance of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Federal and State Extension Services, the United States Bureau of Dairy Industry, and the United States Bureau of Animal Industry.

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The Agricultural Adjustment Administration would offer to purchase from cooperating dairymen some of their healthy, producing dairy cows, at such prices as farmers without milk cows can afford to pay. This price would probably range from fifteen to thirty dollars.

These cows would then be sold to dependable farmers who are without cows under a contract which would obligate the farmer to provide food, pasture, shelter, and care for the cow, to utilize the products for home consumption only, and to reimburse the federal government through small monthly, quarterly or semi-annual payments.

In the case of a tenant farmer the landowner or landlord would be required to agree in writing that the tenant may keep the cow on the farm and produce feed and pasture and provide necessary shelter and care.

The extension service in each state would set up a state committee and through the county agents would set up county and community committees in each county, through which the plan would be carried out.

Through county committees and other agencies a preliminary survey would be made for the purpose of listing the farmers in each community who are without cows. The local committee would eliminate from this list the people who are able to own cows without assistance and also those not equipped to keep cows or who could not be depended upon to properly care for and utilize cows if furnished. Those who desired to purchase cows under the plan would then make application to local committees and these applications would be approved or disapproved by the local and county committees.

From the standpoint of health, the plan would be safeguarded through the testing of cows before transfer and retesting at a later date, so that only healthy producing cows might be transferred.

If the plan is put into operation, each state extension service, through the farm agents and home demonstration agents in each county, will carry on a constructive educational program to help these families give cows the proper care and make the best use of dairy products in the home.

Let me emphasize that not all details of the plan have been completed. Committees have not been organized in the states and counties and no one is yet ready to receive applications for cows. This will be done as promptly as possible if the plan is adopted.

As a preliminary step, the extension service in each state will make a preliminary survey to locate and list the farmers in each community who do not have cows and will prepare an estimate of the number of cows which will be available within that county for replacement. The plan contemplates that the available cows within each county will be placed within that county and the cows available within each state will be placed within that state before any effort is made to transfer cows from one state to another.

The farmer who desires to purchase a cow under this plan should make advance preparation by planting the necessary feed and pasture crops and providing for the proper care of a cow. It would certainly not be sound to place cows upon farms where feed, pasture and shelter are not available.

There are two questions which may be raised with reference to this plan. First, Is there not danger that we may put a lot of new farmers in the dairy business? The answer is that the farmers who are without family milk cows are not potential dairymen. They are not dairy minded, they are not equipped to produce dairy products for market and their purchase contract will bind them not to produce for market.

The second question is: Will this distribution of cows interfere with the existing market for dairy products? And here is the answer: On the average, these families consume comparatively little dairy products. To enable them to produce the needed dairy products for home consumption will not disturb the existing markets and will render a constructive social service.

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